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MEZZOTINTS AFTER MORLAND

THROUGH the bequest of the late Frederick Townsend Martin, the Museum has received forty-five colored mezzotints chiefly after the works of George Morland, the English genre painter, a Dutch clock, and a collection of forty-one pieces of arms and armor.

It is doubtful if the work of any painter was ever more thoroughly engraved than that of Morland; indeed, it is by the publication of his pictures, which lend themselves admirably to reproduction by mezzotint and etching, that he is best known. The chapter on this side of his art is well told by George C. Williamson in his life of the artist (London, 1904), and is here quoted in part.

"The popularity of Morland's works has been the result to a considerable extent of the engravings made from his pictures. They were eminently suitable for reproduction either by mezzotint or etching, and both the weak coloring and the careless drawing of the originals, which characterized so much of Morland's work, were lost sight of when the pictures were engraved.

"Considerably over a hundred mezzotint engravings were made of Morland's work during his life, and this number was increased after his death. His brother-in-law, William Ward, and Ward's younger brother James, were amongst the chief of his engravers. William Ward executed the first mezzotint made after a picture by Morland. It was entitled *The Angler's Repast*, and was issued in 1780, and re-issued nine years afterwards. In 1786 Ward did the picture of *Tom Jones' First Interview with Molly*, in 1787 *Domestic Happiness* and *The Coquette at her Toilet*, and in 1788 he commenced a long series of works, continued down to 1814.

"Both the Wards were pupils of J. R. Smith, and perhaps his best pupils. The elder brother engraved by far the largest number of mezzotints, the work of James Ward not appearing in the list until 1793, and the engravings for which he was responsible numbering perhaps not more than half a dozen altogether, whereas those by

William were about seventy in number. In the case of both brothers the plates were engraved very quickly, and in such a manner as to give the greatest effect with as little effort on the part of the engraver as possible.

"William Ward was an Associate Engraver of the Royal Academy, and mezzotint engraver to the King, the Prince Regent, and the Duke of York.

"James Ward was a Royal Academician, entering the mystic circle in 1811. The student of mezzotints is always particularly grateful to James Ward, as he kept the working proofs from his various plates and presented them to the British Museum, where they constitute a most instructive series of illustrations of mezzotint engraving. The Wards lived at No. 6, Newman Street, and there it was that they published most of the engravings.

"A considerable number of Morland's pictures were engraved by John Raphael Smith. His first work appears in 1788, when he engraved *Delia in the Country* and *Delia in Town*.

"Smith, who was one of the foremost mezzotint engravers England ever produced, was well acquainted with Morland, and shared many of his pleasures and adventures. Towards the latter part of his life, he fell into habits of intemperance learned from his friend, and was compelled to relinquish the practice of the art in which he was so successful. It is, however, to him that we owe some of the finest of the mezzotints after Morland, and, as he was the master of both James and William Ward, lovers of mezzotints owe a still further debt of gratitude to him.

"Rather more than a dozen plates after Morland were engraved by Samuel Williams Reynolds, who issued the wonderful series of three hundred and fifty-seven mezzotints after all the then known paintings by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and will also be ever remembered by reason of the fact that the illustrious David Lucas was his pupil. The earliest work bearing the name of S. W. Reynolds is the *Rustic Ballad*, engraved in 1795. This was followed by *The Bear Hunt* and *The Kennel*, in 1796; *Playing at Dominoes* and *Playing with*

a Monkey, in 1797; A Land Storm, in 1798; Setters, in 1799; The Fisherman's Dog, The Butcher and The Millers, in 1800; The Mail Coach, in 1801; Fishermen Going Out, and Paying the Horse Seller, in 1805; and The Emblematic Palette, in 1806.

"In addition to these, there are three plates by him not dated: Four Men Towing a Boat Ashore, The Pointer, and A Landscape with the Carrier's Cart.

"The celebrated Deserter series, in four plates, was engraved by George Keating, the Irish engraver who studied under W. Dickinson, and executed several plates after Reynolds, Romney, and Gainsborough.

"Philip Dawe, to whose son, George Dawe, we are indebted for the most interesting life of Morland, engraved Love and Constancy Rewarded in 1785, and two very popular pictures called Children Fishing, and Children Gathering Blackberries. He also engraved Anxiety, and Mutual Joy, a pair of pictures representing a ship at sea and a ship in harbor, in the same year.

"James Fittler, the line engraver, who was an Associate Engraver of the Royal Academy in 1800, and executed the plates in Forster's British Gallery, Bell's British Theatre and the portraits in Dibdin, engraved five pictures after Morland in 1790. They were entitled Pedlars, Travellers Reposing, Sliding, The Bell, and Virtue in Danger.

"Another engraver who executed pictures in that same year was George Graham, the man who produced most of the illustrations for Campbell's Pleasures of Hope. He was responsible for a pair called The Soldier's Farewell and The Soldier's Return, but does not appear to have engraved any other pictures until 1813, when he was responsible for another pair called The Angry Boy and Tired Dog and The Young Nurse and Quiet Child.

"A French line engraver named Suntach executed four animal plates, one in 1790, and the other three in 1791. They are almost the only works by this engraver after English subjects, and practically nothing is known of the career of this man.

The four pictures are called Snipe, Duck, Woodcock and Hare.

"An engraver named Thomas Williamson, who is better known for his very minute work and for such a triumph of skill as the engraving of the Lord's Prayer in the size of a threepenny piece, was responsible for fourteen pictures after Morland.

"John Dean, the pupil of Valentine Green, scraped seven mezzotint plates. His first two were in 1787 — Valentine's Day and The Happy Family. In the following year he executed a pair called The Power of Justice and The Triumph of Benevolence, and a single picture called The Widow; while The Tomb, in 1789, and The Happy Family of 1794, were also his work.

"John Young, keeper of the British Institution and one of the active promoters of the Artists' Benevolent Fund, put his name to four pictures, Seduction and Credulous Innocence in 1788; Travellers in 1802, and Villagers in 1803.

"Another man responsible for six mezzotints, and, like Young, keeper of the British Institution, was William Barnard; and his Summer and Winter, which he produced in 1802, were perhaps the best plates he ever executed. His name is also attached to the Brown Jug, The Flowing Bowl, The Country Butcher, and The Cottage Fireside.

"Altogether it will be seen that most of the celebrated engravers of the eighteenth century produced plates after pictures by Morland, some of which, notably the works by Ward, Raphael Smith, Barnard, S. W. Reynolds and Dean, are amongst the best of English mezzotints.

"In 1895 there was a remarkable exhibition of engravings after Morland at Colnaghi's Gallery, and a large number of the colored engravings were exhibited. In the present year (1904) there has been a similar exhibition of fine mezzotints at the same gallery. Some of the finest of the colored stipple engravings at the present moment in such great demand are the work of J. R. Smith; but many of the works of Ward, Dean, Bond, Gauguin, Soiron, Graham, Jenner, Burke, Williamson and Bell, were also issued in color."